



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS
FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
<http://lachildrenscommission.org>**

Monday, September 10, 2012

10:00 AM

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (12-4293)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Present: Chair Patricia Curry, Vice Chair Genevra Berger, Vice Chair Susan F. Friedman, Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Commissioner Helen Kleinberg, Commissioner Dr. La-Doris McClaney, Commissioner Daphne Ng, Commissioner Steven M. Olivas Esq., Commissioner Sandra Rudnick, Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW and Commissioner Martha Trevino-Powell

Excused: Vice Chair Dr. Sunny Kang and Commissioner Dr. Harriette F. Williams

Call to Order. (12-4062)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:07 a.m.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Introductions of September 10, 2012 Meeting attendees. (12-3972)

Self-introductions were made.

2. Approval of the September 10, 2012 Meeting Agenda. (12-3973)

On motion of Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW, seconded by Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, unanimously carried, (Vice Chair Kang and Commissioner Williams being absent), this item was approved. Commissioners Olivas and McClaney were not present during vote taken for this item.

3. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of August 20, 2012. (12-3500)

On motion of Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW, seconded by Commissioner Helen Kleinberg, unanimously carried, (Vice Chair Kang and Commissioner Williams being absent), this item was approved. Commissioners Olivas and McClaney were not present during vote taken for this item.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. REPORT

4. Chair's report for September 10, 2012 by Patricia Curry, Chair. (12-3986)

Chair Curry reported the following:

- **Sylvia Drew Ivie has joined the Commission for Children and Families and will be working as the Executive Liaison. Her office is located in the Commission's offices, Room B-22 of the Hall of Administration.**
- **Input received from Commissioners on the DCFS Strategic Plan has been forwarded to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).**
- **The week of September 10, 2012 is Family Reunification Week. During this week of celebration, the Commission will be recognized for its work and presented with a scroll from the Board of Supervisors on September 11, 2012. Commissioners Kleinberg and Sorkin will attend the reception and accept the scroll on behalf of the Commission. Other events during the Family Reunification Week include a symposium on September 13, 2012 scheduled at Magnolia Place. Commissioners may contact Commission staff today if they plan to attend the symposium.**

By common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

III. DISCUSSION (ELECTION OF OFFICERS)

5. Presentation of the 2012-13 Commission Nomination Slate and Election of Officers.
- **Martha Trevino-Powell, Elections Chair (12-3763)**

Commissioner Trevino-Powell presented the 2012-13 Commission for Children and Families Slate of Officers. The candidates for the positions of Chair/Vice Chairs are the following:

Chair

• Genevra Berger for Chair

Vice Chair Berger thanked everyone who nominated her and looks forward to continuing Chair Curry's work with the support of the Commission.

Vice Chairs

• Susan Friedman, Vice Chair

Vice-Chair Friedman expressed that it has been a great experience serving as current Vice-Chair and working with Chair Curry.

• Helen Kleinberg

Commissioner Kleinberg looks forward to continuing the Commission's work to improve the lives of children.

On motion of Commissioner Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW, seconded by Commissioner Sandra Rudnick, (Vice Chair Kang and Commissioners McClaney and Williams being absent), the 2012-13 Commission for Children and Families Slate of Officers was approved.

Following the count of the ballots and DCFS Director Browning's Report (Item No. 10), Commissioner Trevino Powell announced that the Commission elected Genevra Berger as Chair, and that Commissioners Susan Friedman and Helen Kleinberg, respectively were reelected/elected Vice-Chairs of the Commission for 2012-13.

IV. PRESENTATION/REPORT

6. Presentation on Pregnant and Parenting Teens.

Donna Fernandez, Program Manager, Child Welfare Health Services, DCFS
Sandra Rudnick, Commissioner (12-4095)

Commissioner Rudnick introduced Donna Fernandez and Barbara Facher, Social Worker for The Alliance for Children's Rights and explained that the presentation before the Commission today is an overview of the work being done to educate children to prevent teen pregnancy; educational efforts for teens who are parenting and pregnant teens, that will avert them from entering the foster care system. An extensive report will be given at the October 1, 2012 meeting.

Ms. Fernandez reported the following:

- **The DCFS Pregnant and Parenting Teen Workgroup was formed in 2003. Some of the Workgroup's activities include the creation of an advocacy for legislation to ensure that the comprehensive needs of pregnant and parenting teens are addressed. These efforts have primarily been headed by the Children's Law Center, Public Counsel and The Alliance for Children's Rights. The most significant piece of legislation that has passed is Senate Bill 500 which implemented specialized training and financial incentives for providers of Whole Family Foster Care Homes. This Bill keeps teenage mothers in foster care united with their babies by providing placement in a foster home setting where teen parents are able to develop the skills necessary to provide a safe, stable, and permanent home for their children. There has been a struggle to get a pool of providers.**

Ms. Facher reported the following:

- **Baby City events were created to address the unmet needs of parenting teens transitioning out of the foster care system. These events are a one day fair that offer resources and education for pregnant and parenting teens. The events were implemented State wide and in collaboration with Community Colleges. To date, there have been 20 Baby City events that were well attended. The events held in the Los Angeles area were done in collaboration with DCFS and members of the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) taskforce. Funding for these events has been a challenge.**
- **Pregnant and Parenting Teen Conferences were developed to address issues that would emerge with teens that became pregnant and decided to keep the child. This is a voluntary conference that is facilitated and coordinated by a DCFS Social Worker who brings together a group of individuals that the pregnant teen has identified as an important figure in their life. There has been a total of 58 conferences held in 2012 and 2011 are scheduled.**
- **One of the goals of the Workgroup is to stop the intergenerational cycle of teen pregnancy and to wrap services around these teens to ensure that they have a viable future.**

Ms. Fernandez added the following:

- A Youth Development Reproductive Health procedural guide has been developed for Social Workers to help the youth with reproductive health and family planning.
- The Children's Law Center has been successful in receiving various grants to ensure that Reproductive Health information and education is accessible to youth.
- Currently, there are approximately 270 parenting teens in the child welfare system. The Workgroup has been advocating for a mechanism to track pregnant teens.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which is in the final stages of implementation, was developed. The MOU will allow more DCFS pregnant youth to be referred to the Nurse Family Partnership Program and will also assist in the tracking of pregnant teens.
- A workgroup that focuses on improving the sex and reproductive education of youth was also established.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

7. Report on the Department of Public Health's Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Project:

- Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW, Commissioner (12-4243)

Commissioner Sorkin, distributed and discussed a document depicting the percentage of children in each assembly district who are overweight, from the publication titled, "An epidemic: Overweight and Unfit Children In California Assembly District," from the California Center for Public Health Advocacy and reported the following:

- On December 1, 2009, the Board of Supervisors approved a Child Wellness Policy (Item 15 of 12/1/09) for Los Angeles County, largely through the role our Commission played. Our work started in 2007 when the Commission brought together various County Departments to recognize the need for a comprehensive policy to address child wellness.
- On August 16, 2012, the Department of Public Health (DPH) convened the Key Thought Leaders meeting to discuss the Early Childhood

Obesity Prevention Project-Investing in our Children's Health. This meeting was convened because Public Health received a \$41 million grant from First 5 LA. Commissioner Sorkin reported that following her attendance to this meeting she met with Dr. Heather Readhead, this past week, and indicated that it is apparent that there is some concern regarding how this money will be allocated.

- **At the Key Thought Leaders meeting held August 16, 2012, the question was asked as to whether selection of sites would be based on need as some County Departments have generally elected to fund what is expedient rather than address where the need for services is the greatest. While the final decision regarding the first three or four clinic sites to be included in the first year of funding has not been determined this information will be announced in December 2012. It appears that expediency has resulted in the selection of at least one of the clinics. Additionally, three pilot clinics will be implemented during the first year with the goal of reaching 30 clinics during the grant period. The DPH also announced that it will allocate \$17 million of the total grant to the eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs) during the subsequent years of the grant. This again raises concern because the SPAs do not have equal needs. If these funds are divided equally among the eight SPAs, the issue of disproportionality, disparity, and need will not addressed.**
- **Based on the current information presented at the Key Thought Leaders meeting held August 16, 2012 and information provided to Commissioner Sorkin in her meeting with Dr. Heather Readhead, Commissioner Sorkin recommended that DPH consider:**
 - Reviewing available data with respect to children under the age of five, women of childbearing age, and rates of obesity.**
 - Requesting data from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) Data smart database as of January 10, 2012.**
 - Expediting a Request for Proposal (RFP) to select the three initial clinics that serve areas of highest need and delineating and describing what services are to be provided and how services will be evaluated.**
 - Addressing disproportionality and disparity by allocating the available \$17 million dollars based on need.**

-Ensuring that all components of the \$41 million grant work together to develop a comprehensive plan that include clinics, other County Departments, the Women, Infants and Children Program Centers (WIC Centers), and child care resources.

Commissioner Sorkin also recommended that the Commission meet with Dr. Jonathan Fielding or his designee to discuss these concerns. Chair Curry noted that she attended a First 5 LA meeting last week and had an opportunity to speak briefly with the Department of Public Health's Director, Dr. Fielding, and asked if the some of the members of the Commission could meet with one of his designees, Ms. Cynthia Harding, to address Commissioner Sorkin's concerns.

By common consent and there being no objection, item was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

V. WORKGROUP UPDATE/PRESENTATION

8. Children/TAY Mental Health Workgroups

- Susan F. Friedman, Workgroup Co-Chair (TAY Mental Health Workgroup) (12-4217)

Chair Curry distributed copies of the single minute and motions by Supervisors Ridley-Thomas, Antonovich and Knabe, related to enhancing services for Transitional Age Youth (TAY) to prevent them from “crossing over” into the delinquency system. She further added that the Commission’s TAY Mental Health Workgroup (Workgroup) has worked really hard these past months. She acknowledged and thanked Vice Chairs Berger and Friedman as well as Commissioner Kleinberg and Sorkin for their work and collaboration which contributed to the introduction of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas’ motion that was unanimously passed by the Board of Supervisors (Board) on September 4, 2012 (Item No. 2). Chair Curry also thanked, Ms. Sylvia Drew Ivie, former Deputy for Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, who was instrumental in the development of said motion, as well as Commission staff and anyone who collaborated on this endeavor.

Commissioner Friedman reported that several members of the Commission addressed the Board at last Tuesday’s Board meeting. She also thanked Ms. Drew Ivie for her work in getting this motion completed and reported the following:

- The Board has identified a group of County Departments which include the Departments of Children and Families (DCFS), Mental Health (DMH), to work concurrently with County Counsel, the Chief Executive Officer, the Mental Health Commission, the Commission for Children and Families, as well as the juvenile court leadership to develop a process that works best in addressing Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funding to support programs for the TAY population.
- The Workgroup stressed to the Board that they could not wait another year to address the issue of MHSA funding for TAY.
- The Board requested that the group identified by Board report back in 30 days on the issued identified in the motion (Item No. 2 of September 4, 2012).

Chair Curry noted that she will wait until direction is provided from the Ms. Antonia Jimenez with the Chief Executive Office for the Commission's/Workgroup's involvement.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

9. Presentation on Public Counsel's holistic and collaborative advocacy work on behalf of foster and transition age youth:

Paul L. Freese, Jr., Vice President, Public Counsel (12-4071)

Chair Curry introduced and welcomed Mr. Freese.

Mr. Freese reported that he has been with Public Counsel since 1994 where he began his career providing services at homeless runaway clinics; henceforth approximately 18 years providing advocacy work for foster youth. He thanked the Commission for the great advocate work helping this most vulnerable youth (foster youth) and youth in the juvenile justice system. Mr. Freese shared personal experiences about his family, accounts in his career, and noted that growing up he never saw homeless individuals. However, that changed as the years went by. He discovered that many of the homeless individuals were generally former foster youth; this discovery sparked an interest in him to help this population.

Mr. Freese added that:

- **Public Counsel’s mission is to find “pro bono” attorneys to help provide legal representation to people that cannot afford to provide it themselves.**
- **Public Counsel’s goals are: 1) mobilize pro bono attorneys to advance equal access to justice on behalf of the poor and marginalized; 2) provide a vehicle for attorneys to give back to the community and protect the rights of vulnerable youth, adults and families, and 3) empower the most disadvantaged individuals and households in our community to avoid poverty and other adverse outcomes**
- **Our organization gives youth a personal advocate who helps fight their battles and helps empower them to make them aware that the system is not stacked up against them.**
- **Public Counsel has worked vigorously with the Commission for Children and Families to give tools to youth through advocacy supports and is looking systemically to transform a system that is fundamentally broken.**
- **Four years ago the Board of Supervisors came up with a study indicating that 75% of all state prisoners had been in foster care, out of home placement. This is a staggering motivation and “wake up” call for all of us to not give up on this battle for the betterment of this population.**
- **Public Counsel currently has over 106 staff, including 65 attorneys. The Homeless and Prevention Law Project currently consists of over 20 staff. The Children’s Rights Project is the largest project of Public Counsel that deals with foster youth and juvenile justice system that strives both at the policy and individual advocacy level to make a difference.**
- **Public Counsel’s first strategy is prevention of placement in foster care through the Peace of Mind Guardianship Project. Assistance for this process is available to anyone in need. A second strategy if youth end up in the foster care system is to facilitate adoption for a quick transition into a loving home. The organization has an adoption program that helps facilitate special needs adoption due to their complexity. This program recently finalized its 7000th adoption out of foster care this year. Most recently, Public Counsel also assisted the juvenile court to process backed up cases. Additionally, we have a model that provides**

wraparound educational support for youth who age out of the foster care system to provide these youth with an education for self-sufficiency. This program has yielded seven youth that are currently attending university of which many have earned full scholarship programs.

- Another goal of organization is to keep foster youth from being criminalized. Most often crossover youth transition from being a victim to being a perpetrator and lose eligibility to services, including housing. Chair Curry, Commissioner Kleinberg and Mr. Freese have worked on this effort tirelessly, most recently in a team, dealing with Prop 63, to raise awareness of the needs to housing for foster youth. Today, there are approximately 1,200 transitional living housing programs when in 1994, only 200 were in existence.

Mr. Freese noted that such accomplishments, not limited to those listed above, could have been possible without the work of passionate advocates such as the Commission, especially through the work of Chair Curry which has been exceptionally instrumental.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

VI. DCFS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

10. DCFS Director's Report by Philip Browning, Director, DCFS for September 10, 2012. (12-3974)
 - Family Reunification Week consists of a series of events highlighting the importance of reunification. Judge Nash will be closing the week with an event on Friday, September 14, 2012 at the Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court. Additionally, an advocacy group from Taiwan will be spending the week with DCFS observing its child welfare projects and practices.
 - A press conference sponsored by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas was held on Friday, September 7, 2012 that highlighted services available through DCFS for children and families that are at-risk. There was discussion about the need for more education and training for law enforcement in dealing with situations in which parents abandon their children. The County's DCFS Child Protection Hotline was provided at the press conference as a resource.
 - DCFS will be receiving a Quality and Productivity Commission Award, the ceremony will be held in October, 2012. Details will be provided to the Commission once they are available.

- **DCFS had two booths at the Los Angeles County Fair for raising awareness on foster parenting and increasing interest in adoption. There were several people that showed interested in becoming a foster parent however; staff indicated that the interest typically declines once individuals are made fully aware of the process. Increasing the number of foster parents is one of the objectives of DCFS Strategic Plan.**
- **50 new Social Workers will be starting the DCFS training academy and ultimately be assigned to offices that have had high staff turnover. To help stabilize these offices, new Social Workers are expected to remain at the assigned office for a minimum of two years. Additionally, there is a provision in the contract of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the unions that addresses employees transferring out of offices that are under staffed or have inexperienced staff.**
- **Mr. Browning will be meeting later today with Judge Nash and staff at the Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court regarding the Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP) and to discuss issues with the handling of children over the age of ten that are detained and awaiting placement. Security at the current location has been challenging and there has been discussion with Judge Nash on an alternative location. The Child Awaiting Placement (CAP) Center located at Los Angeles County USC Medical Center has been operating since July, 2012. Ninety-five percent of the children that come into CAP are under the age of nine and approximately half of these children are placed within ten hours. There are forthcoming provider contracts that will yield additional shelter beds. Some of these providers are current providers that have agreed to expand their accessibility and accept children in the middle of the night. The current contract which included a provision that allowed providers to turn their phone off at 5:00 p.m. has been revised and will include verbiage that encourages providers to be accessible after 5:00 p.m.**
- **The State approved funding that allows DCFS to use an outside vendor to evaluate and update the Foster Care Search Engine which is currently not being utilized to its full potential due to the system being outdated and inefficient. The hope is to have a web-based system that providers are able to input information allowing Social Workers to view provider vacancies in real time.**

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- **The Aggressive Placement Unit is a new concept being applied utilizing a ranking system developed by Helen Berberian that classifies children coming into the ERCP with the most severe behavioral problems highest on the ranking scale. These severe cases are then evaluated by a team led by Dr. Charles Sophy. Thus far, 25 cases have been evaluated over the past couple of months and approximately half of these children have returned home.**

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS

Matters Not Posted

11. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (12-3976)

There were none.

Public Comment

12. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (12-3977)

No members of the public addressed the Commission.

Announcements

13. Announcements for the meeting of September 10, 2012. (12-3979)

There were none.

Adjournment

14. Adjournment of the meeting of September 10, 2012. (12-3982)

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.